

Board of Education
June 14, 2022 – Special Meeting
Via Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Alexander Oliphant, Vice Chair Mary Tomasi, Donna Antonaccio, Margo Gignac, Christopher Rivers, Rosemary Gignac.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Interim Superintendent Dr. Thomas McDowell, Colchester Elementary School Principal Judy O'Meara, Jack Jackter Intermediate School Principal Elise Butson, William J. Johnston Middle School Principal Chris Bennett, Director of Teaching and Learning Charles Hewes, Director of Human Resources Shannon Ramsby, Director of Technology Darren Smith, Director of Educational Operations Mario Hurtado, Business Director Rachel Linkkila, Board of Finance Liaison Mike Egan.

1. MEETING OPENING

1.1 Call to Order

Chair Alex Oliphant called this Regular Meeting to order at 601 pm.

1.2 Roll Call

Chair Oliphant called the roll to establish a quorum.

1.3 Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Oliphant led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. RECOGNITIONS/ADNOWLEDGEMENTS

2.1 Celebration of Retirees

Dr. McDowell noted that the ten retirees have 216 years of service. Dr. McDowell thanked them and said he will visit with all of the retirees with a gift from the Board next week. Happy Retirement!

Board Member Mary Tomasi said it was a pleasure to know and work with some of the teachers that are retiring.

2.2 Recognition of BOE Secretary Jessica Morozowich

J. Morozowich was recognized for her work on the Board of Education. The Board thanked her and wished her the best with her move out of state.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Jessica Trusz spoke in support of Mr. Peel.

Monica Swyden Egan said she was disappointed that the valedictorian and salutatorian and other celebrations have been dropped from the agenda.

Sam Norman, school district union president, thanked the Board for scheduling the presentation by Mark Powers this evening. While we have been through quite a bit of turmoil, the district is now going in the right direction

Joann Holmes spoke in support of Mr. Peel and said he has earned her family's respect.

Amanda LaSaracina also spoke in support of Mr. Peel saying Mr. Peel knew all of the students and kept in touch with the parents, and dedicated hours to the graduation ceremony.

Keri Toper had raised her hand but no comments were made.

4. REPORT FROM SUPERINTENDENT

4.1 Welcome New Business Director

Interim Superintendent McDowell welcomed Rachel Linkkila as the new Business Director.

4.2 Update on Bacon Academy Oil Spill

M. Hurtado gave an update on the oil spill accident in February. One monitoring well still has a slight amount of oil. This project is scheduled to be completed in July. There are no signs of oil on the outside area and cracks will need to be sealed in the basement area. The cost is between \$280-\$285,000. The insurance company clear that this is not covered.

It was hoped that the abatement of the tank would allow an extension for ten years, however, through the process of compliance, DEEP would not allow keeping the tank. It must be removed and replaced. There is no option but to replace the tank. The parameters are going to make it difficult to accomplish due to retaining contractors at this time trying to meet short timeframes on bids.

4.3 Update on Special Education Survey

Dr. McDowell explained the first survey is to receive input from students, parents and staff regarding attributes, qualification, etc. for Director Special Education. The information from the survey will be used to complete the parent survey. A parent will be on the interview panel. Applications are being screened at this time.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

5.1 Approval of May 10, 2022 BOE Regular Meeting Minutes

5.2 Approval of May 13, 2022 BOE Emergency Meeting Minutes

5.3 Fundraising Approval Request – BA Young Dems Pizza After Exams

5.4 Fundraising Approval Request – Boys Lacrosse Subway Sponsorship

5.5 CES Donations from Colchester McDonald's

5.6 CES Donation from JB Trucking

5.7 JJIS PTO Donation for Technology Equipment

5.8 JJIS Donation from Colchester McDonald's

5.9 BA Robotics Team Donation from Dominion Energy

5.10 BA Piano Donation

5.11 BA Material Removal Request - Pianos

Motion by: M. Tomasi

to approve the Consent Agenda items with the exception of Item 5.2.

Second by: C. Rivers

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Motion by: M. Gignac

to approve Item 5.2 on the Consent Agenda.

Second by: D. Antonaccio.

Vote: Abstaining: M. Tomasi (absent from meeting).

In favor: All others. Approved.

6. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

6.1 Director of Human Resources Update

Director Shannon Ramsby reviewed his report with the Board members and noted that there are 19 new staff members. S. Ramsby is impressed with quality of people hired but noted the demographics have not changed.

6.2 Approval of Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes of March 1, 2022

Motion by: M. Tomasi

to approve the Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes of March 1, 2022.

Second: R. Gignac

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

6.3 Virtual High School Coordinator Job Description

C. Hewes reviewed the job description for this position – this is the liaison person for teachers, counselors and students. The coordinator will work with students during enrollment and help them with the platform. The teachers are certified, this platform will provide a variety of courses. The coordinator will be a liaison between BA and virtual high school.

Motion by: C. Rivers

to approve the job description for the Virtual High School Coordinator.

Second by: R. Gignac.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

6.4 Safe School Climate Specialist Job Description - Building

At this time, each school has a specialist. This job description is relevant to the building. The Specialist will supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying, if appointed, and will foster a positive school atmosphere. The exception is at BA where the administration conducts the investigation. This is a stipend position.

6.5 Safe School Climate Coordinator Job Description - District

Dr. Hewes said the State requires each district have a coordinator. This job description is relevant to the district. This is also a stipend position.

Motion by: D. Antonucci

to approve Items 6.4 Safe School Climate Specialist Job Description and 6.5 Safe School Climate Coordinator Job Description.

Second by: C. Rivers.

Vote: Unanimous to approve both job descriptions.

7. BUDGET COMMITTEE

7.1 Monthly Budget Reports

Business Director Rachel Linkkila reviewed the reports with the Board members.

7.2 Cafeteria Account Report and Transfer of Funds

A transfer of \$182,564.55 to refund money used to cover the losses in the Food Service Department due to the COVID pandemic in fiscal year 2021 and 2020, is being requested.

Motion by: M. Tomasi

to approve the transfer of \$182,564.55 as requested.

Second by: R. Gignac.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Motion by: M. Tomasi

to approve the transfer in the amount \$120,000 to the BOE Capital Reserve Fund for Cafeteria equipment upgrades and maintenance.

Second by: M. Gignac.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

7.3. Budget Transfers over \$5,000

Motion by: C. Rivers

to approve the Bacon Academy budget transfer from alternative education salaries to the certified salary line at Bacon Academy.

Second by: M. Tomasi.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

8. CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

8.1 Approval of May 7, 2022 Curriculum Committee Minutes

Motion by: M. Tomasi

to approve the May 7, 2022 Curriculum Committee Minutes

Second by: C. Rivers.

Vote: Abstaining: D. Antonaccio, M. Gignac, R. Gignac.

In favor: M. Tomasi, R. Gignac. **Motion denied.**

8.2 TEVAL Flexibilities for 2022-2023

The State Department of Education has provided flexibility over the teacher evaluation plan due to the Covid -19 pandemic. This flexible plan will be for the next year only as a new plan will be available for 2023-2024.

Motion by: M. Tomasi

to approve the TEVAL Flexibilities for 2022-2023 as presented.

Second by: M. Gignac.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

8.3 Proposed Math Curriculum

Dr. Hewes gave a presentation of the proposed Math Curriculum.

Motion by: M. Gignac

to approve the math curriculum as presented.

Second by: C. Rivers.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

9. POLICY COMMITTEE

9.1 Bylaw 9221 Filling Vacancies on the Board

As this is the first reading, no action was taken.

10. PRIORITY DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

10.1 Suspension of Bylaw 9221 Filling Vacancies on the Board per Bylaw 9314

Motion by: M. Gignac

to approve the suspension of Bylaw 9221 Filling Vacancies on the Board per Bylaw 9314.

Second by: D. Antonaccio.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

10.2 Precision Retirement Group Presentation

S. Ramsby introduced Mark Powers from Precision Retirement Group. This is benefit for retiring teachers at no cost to the Board of Education.

Motion by: C. Rivers

to approve the administration to work with Precision Retirement Group to finalize a no-cost agreement in regard to an accumulated sick pay solution for retirees and a FICA alternative retirement plan pending approved MOU from the Teachers' Union.

Second by: R. Gignac.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

10.3 Discussion and Possible Action on Appointment of Assistant Superintendent

Interim Superintendent Dr. McDowell proposed to appoint Dr. Charles Hewes as the Assistant Superintendent. This would allow him to help with administrative evaluations. At this time, Dr. Hewes is the Director Teaching and Learning and taking on some of the responsibilities of an Assistant Superintendent.

Motion by: M. Gignac

on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent, to change Dr. Hewes' title to Assistant Superintendent with the same job description of the Director of Teaching and Learning plus other duties.

Second by: R. Gignac

Vote: No: M. Tomasi, C. Rivers.

Yes, D. Antonaccio, R. Gignac, M. Gignac, A. Oliphant. Approved.

10.4 Approval of 2022-2023 Operating Budget as Recommended by Administration

Motion by: C. Rivers

to approve the 2022-2023 operating budget in the amount of \$42,025,701 as recommended by the administration.

Second by: M. Tomasi.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

10.5 Changes of Authorized Signers for State of CT Agreement for Child Nutrition Program

Motion by: D. Antonaccio

to change the authorized signers for the State of CT Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs to Dr. Thomas Y. McDowell and Ms. Rachel Linkkila.

Second by: M. Gignac.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

10.6 Committee as a Whole

This format does away with all subcommittees and the Board members are responsible as a whole for each prior subcommittee item. Discussion followed and a motion made.

Motion by: M. Gignac

to try 'Committee as a Whole' on a trial basis with the Regular Board Meeting on the second Tuesday and discussing committee business at a Special Meeting on the fourth Tuesday of the month.

Second by: R. Gignac.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

11. REPORTS FROM BOARD LIAISONS

11.1 Reports from Board Liaisons

Board of Selectmen: No report.

Board of Finance: M. Gignac noted that voters passed the Board of Education budget.

P&R Parent Commission: C. Rivers

PTO Collaborative: M. Gignac – the next meeting will be in the Fall.

C3 Collaborative: No report.

Commission on Aging: M. Tomasi

CORE Commission: Liaison to be determined.

Youth and Social Services: No report.

12. BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS and INFORMATION ITEMS

12.1 Next Meetings – The next scheduled meeting for the Board of Education is July 12, 2022.

12.2 Monthly Student Enrollment

Student enrollment for the month of May is **2263**.

12.3 Notices of Retirement/Resignation

A retirement notice has been received from Nancy Casey, and resignation notices have been received from Marcie Cunningham, David Zachas, Lauren Miller, Christina Cornell, Melissa Dei and Gayle Hathaway.

13. PUBLIC COMMENT

Michelle Gilman thanked the Board for all the activities but has a concern about the assistant superintendent position. It has not been reviewed or discussed, how would it impact the budget and felt it should wait until a new superintendent has been hired

Krista Kardys said she was profoundly saddened that Bacon Academy's principal will not be there to shake the graduates hands, it is a difficult situation for parents and students.

Vince Rose thanked the Board members stated concern for reduction in teachers and would like to keep the maximum number of teachers.

Mike Egan, BOF member and BOE liaison thanked everyone for the hard work done in handling a difficult situation and expressed concern for the assistant superintendent position as a major change at a time when a new superintendent is not in place yet.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Oliphant adjourned this Special Meeting at 9:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Mary Jane Slade
Recording Secretary